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## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

June 14, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

### WORKING WITH AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Today we are starting the most important debate of 2012 in Congress, the reauthorization of the farm bill.

Now, it is true that we are just talking about the ag appropriations bill, and much of the reform agenda will be difficult or ruled out of order due to the restrictive approach of the rules, although in the past some of my Re-

publican leadership friends have had no compunction about legislating on appropriations bills. But here we will be protecting large agribusiness instead of American farmers, ranchers, consumers, and the environment.

This debate matters. Each point that is made on the floor or in the media, each vote that is accumulated against the status quo and towards change and fairness is another step towards reforming the one area that almost every independent analyst agrees is right for reform.

From the far right to the far left, people agree it is time. American agricultural policy is frozen in time through the past collection of farm bills. It misallocates scarce dollars, it spends too much on the richest farming interests who really don't need it, and doesn't provide enough support for the majority of farmers and ranchers who do. It does not place a priority on the nutrition of our children, and it unleashes an assault on the environment.

There must be a better way. There is a better way. Cutting back on unnecessary expenditures for the wealthy and the undeserving would make it possible to give a little more to the farmers and ranchers, the majority of whom don't get anything under the current farm bill.

Now, most farmers and ranchers don't just want money. They would much rather have assistance to make them more competitive. There is far more that can be done by providing for important research to strengthen the production of food. More can be done to market American agricultural products at home and abroad, to establish farmer's markets. More can be done to protect farmers and their crops from disease and pests. And we can do so in a way that is consistent with our environmental values and our budgetary constraints.

Farmers and ranchers as a group are some of the most outstanding stewards

of the land and the environment we have in America. But we are looking now at a farm bill that is going to dramatically cut back the money to help them with environmental compliance, even requiring breaking some existing contracts.

But complying with environmental regulations and changing policies is going to take some effort and in some cases is going to cost money. Why aren't we protecting the environmental programs and providing technical assistance to help these agricultural interests do what they want to do, which will not only improve water quality, wildlife habitat and air quality, but will put money in their pockets, supporting small and medium-sized operations?

Then there is the issue of nutrition. By skewing the production to artificially prop up and make profitable sugar, massive subsidies for corn, putting big money behind it, instead of improving the nutrition for our schools, for example, we are literally subsidizing a diet through our tax dollars that is making our kids sick. Instead, we should be helping them both be well-fed and healthy, not just well-fed with empty calories, but with fruits and vegetables that will strengthen their bodies and the prospect for long-term health. But the people who grow food, like fruits and vegetables, are discriminated against under existing American farm policies.

Help farmers and ranchers grow food, protect the environment, and strengthen the economy. It is a simple formula. It is hard to imagine a more pro-American agenda and one that Americans from all across the political spectrum agree with. It is time to listen to them, to work for them, and make it happen.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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